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Portugal

Biotechnology

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Report Highlights: Portuguese authorities just established their first agriculture biotechnology-free zone. The Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries reportedly claims that the biotechnology-free declaration is the first of its kind in Europe in that it is based on an European Union-approved national legislation. Farmers in the zone produce mostly citrus so the declaration appears to be more symbolic, possibly an enticement by the local authorities to bring in more Northern tourists.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Madrid [SP1]
[PO]

Executive Summary

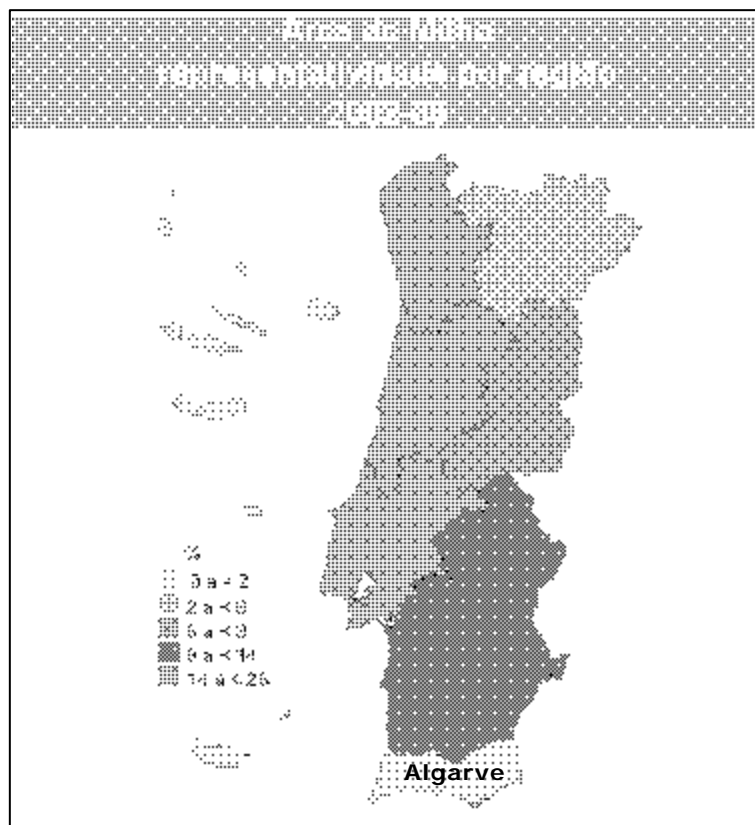
The Lagos municipality recently completed all legal requirements to become the first biotechnology-free zone in Portugal, subsequent the established procedures of the Government of Portugal (GOP) for declaring this status. The *Algarve* Regional Directorate of Agriculture and Fisheries verified that all Lagos municipality farmers supported the request. As noted in GAIN PO7007, all farmers in a region/county must support the biotechnology-free declaration for it to be fully recognized, and if a farmer in the municipality decides to use biotechnology, the GOP will revoke the biotechnology-free status.

Portugal is now the first European Union (EU) Member State to establish a procedure to recognize a biotechnology-free zone via national legislation that the European Commission (EC) has given the green light. Other EU Member States or regions thereof have declared themselves biotechnology-free, but without establishing EC approved laws under which they can administer the biotechnology-free zones.

According to the National Institute of Statistics (INE), Portuguese farmers produced approximately 4,300 hectares of biotechnology corn in this year, up from about 1,400 in 2006. Farmers in the *Algarve* region, and even less the Lagos municipality, produce an insignificant amount of corn. They mainly produce citrus, but are more-and-more abandoning traditional farming for tourism and eco-tourism related activities.

The Daily Republic (*Diário da República*) published the biotechnology-free status on November 5, 2007. The Lagos municipality will need to renew the application in five years or lose the accreditation. The *Algarve* Regional Directorate of Agriculture and Fisheries also posted this status in Article No. 25306 (No. 5 306/2007) on November 5, 2007. The Lagos municipal requested this biotechnology-free status on September 4, 2006 (please see the map below).

Percentage of Corn represented by region, 2002-2006



Portugal Agrícola, 1980-2006 by National Institute of Statistics (2007; pg. 43)